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FLOOR DEBATE

April 10, 2006 LB 821

(Read title.) The bill was introduced on January 4 of this year, referred to the Education Committee. The bill was reported to General File. There are committee amendments pending. (AM2314, Legislative Journal page 763.)

SENATOR CUDABACK: Senator Erdman, to open on LB 821.

SENATOR ERDMAN: Thank you, Mr. President, members of the Legislature. LB 821 is before you as a result of a five-year process that we have undertaken in working with the members of the education community, the homeschool community, as well as those who are interested players in both, to make sure that we come up with a policy that balances the interests of both in creating an opportunity for those who would seek to access the public school districts in the state of Nebraska. LB 821, as introduced, would authorize the enrollment of exempt students on a part-time basis in a public school in the resident district or an option district. Exempt student would be defined as a student enrolled in a private, denominational, parochial school which elects not to meet state accreditation or approval requirements. On or before August 1, 2006, the school boards would be required to adopt policies and procedures to ensure that exempt students would be accepted in the same manner to academic courses or program and furnished with instructional materials on the same basis as full-time students. And the policies and procedures would be outlined in the bill to specify the process in which a school board would use in order to determine what those requirements would be. Additionally in the bill, the exempt students would be eligible to participate in or to try out for cocurricular or extracurricular activities in the resident district or an option district. A right to participate in any activity is not conferred by this provision. Exempt students would be required to demonstrate compliance with insurance, physical examination, age, transfer, and other requirements on the basis of full-time students. That was the original bill as introduced. As we began the process of deliberating with those that testified at the committee hearing, which you'll notice there was a number of those in favor of the bill, including the Nebraska School Activities Association, Omaha Public Schools...or, excuse me, Millard Public Schools, Lincoln Public Schools, Westside Schools, and others. In